



Website Traffic Demolition

or, How To Keep People Away From Your Site

Jonathan Harbaugh

trafficedemolition@prowebsitemanagement.com

version
1.0

PRO Website Management
<http://www.prowebsitemanagement.com>

Awesome Solutions For Webmasters
<http://www.prowebsitemanagement.com/awesomesolutions.html>

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Introduction

A well designed website is one of the most important keys in having a website at all. Yet I'm amazed at the amount of websites which seem to completely forget this!

I recently wrote about some of the *things* which can keep people away from your website. I published these articles in my newsletter, *Awesome Solutions For Webmasters*.

Even after writing the articles and publishing them in my newsletter, I knew that I could provide more information. That's why I decided to put it and more into this ebook.

I suggest that you use this ebook as a checklist for your website. Are you doing something you shouldn't be doing?

The different things mentioned in here are not small matters. You may be scaring away traffic, and the odds are, they will never return.

Hope this helps,

Jonathan Harbaugh
trafficdemolition@prowebsitemanagement.com

P.S

I know I'm not perfect. ;-)

I'm sure that I've missed some stuff that should be in here. What you can do is, email me. With information that I should include in here, such as no-nos for websites, useful 'tools', etc.

I hope to update this e-book, and people who have contributed in some way will be mentioned in a Special Thanks section(which I plan to have in the future). So, if you've helped in someway, I'll mention you and your website there. This is a way to get some publicity for you and your site.

Send all email to : trafficdemolition@prowebsitemanagement.com

1. Large Images



First, you need to consider the fact that many people still connect to the internet via modem, and even then, their connection might be pretty slow.

People might not consider it worth their time to wait for some 'cool' images to load, or perhaps the large 300kb photo of the webmaster to load.

I was at a site recently, where I thought the server was really slow at loading the images. Well, it turns out it was loading a 900kb bmp file! An image of that size can be reduced to way under 100kb.

I know many of you wouldn't stick giant bmp files on your websites, BUT those .jpgs and .gifs can also be reduced substantially, saving time for your visitor, and reducing the odds of the person just leaving.

Solution?

Optimize your graphics.

I recommend you use the Spinwave service for your .gif and .jpg files.
<http://www.prowebmanagement.com/cooltools/spinwave.html>

The Spinwave online service is FREE. Spinwave does offer graphic optimization programs which you can purchase, but their online service is free.

Make sure all your images are optimized. You want to 'crunch' them down for size, yet you want them to keep their quality.

Note: Just because you optimized your graphics, doesn't mean the visitor still wants to download 20-30 images. Don't overdue it on the number of graphics that you have on a page.

2. CAPS



USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS IN EMAILS, ON WEBSITES AND WHILE CHATTING IS CONSIDERED RUDE. IT IS CONSIDERED YELLING.

IT IS COMMON INTERNET ETIQUETTE TO NOT USE ALL UPPERCASE LETTERS WHEN ONLINE. OF COURSE, YOU CAN USE UPPERCASE LETTERS IN SOME SITUATIONS AS FOR TITLES, HEADLINES, OR WHEN YOU REALLY WANT TO GET SOMEBODY'S ATTENTION.

READ THE ABOVE PARAGRAPHS WITHOUT CAPS:

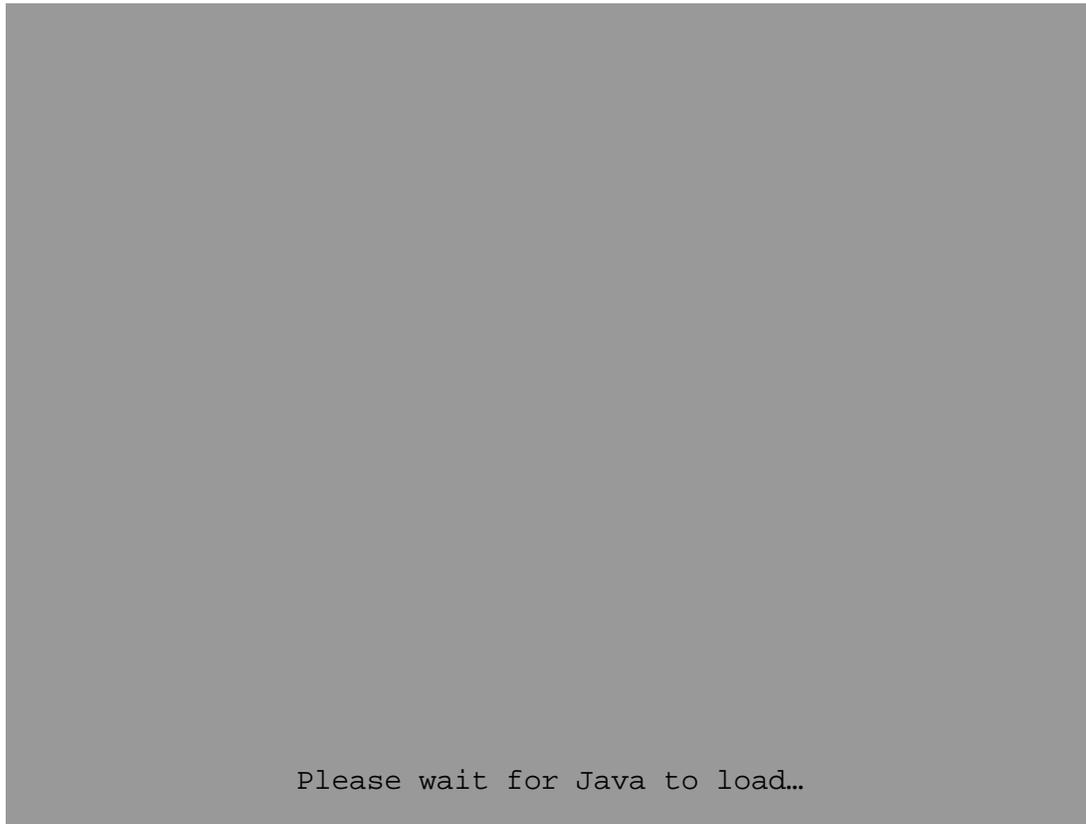
Using all capital letters in emails, on websites and while chatting is considered rude. It's considered yelling.

It is common internet etiquette to not use all uppercase letters when online. Of course, you can use uppercase letters in some situations as for titles, headlines, or when you really want to get somebody's attention.

Did you notice a difference?

I THOUGHT SO!

3. Java



By the way, don't wait. I didn't actually put any Java here. :-)

How many popular/professional websites use Java?

Very, very few.

Why isn't Java popular?

Because Java is a clogger. It takes awhile to load, usually holds up the browser, occasionally crashing it.

Of course, Java occasionally is used. But it should never be on your main page. And let people know if the page they are headed to contains Java.

Avoid doing those dumb Java tricks where bubbles appear over the photos or there is snow falling. I could give more examples but you get the idea.

4. Under Construction signs



This page is
under
construction.

Please come back
another day.

When I first set up a small homepage in Geocities back in about 1996, I thought it was cute to put "**This Page is Under Construction**".

It wasn't too bad, considering it was a personal site, and the year was 1996.

It isn't 1996 anymore. And construction signs aren't cute.

If you are a serious webmaster, then your site should always be under construction, in the sense that you are working on your site. That doesn't mean you have to let everybody know.

Who wants to visit an *under construction* website?
You don't know what pages might be dead. Why not spend your time at a website that doesn't advertise the fact that they are *under construction*?

5. Counters

You are visitor 000039 to read this page.

Counters were popular a few years ago. Most websites carried them.

You'll still find counters on the internet, but counters shouldn't be used on a business website, or a website with which you are trying to give a professional appearance.

If the numbers on the counter are low, your visitor will question whether your website is legit.

(If this site is legitimate, then do very few people visit this site?)

If the numbers on your counter are high, many visitors will scoff at the numbers.

(Yeah, right. There is no way he's getting this many hits)

If you are going to use counters, then use invisible ones that people can't see.

There are quite a few good tracking programs out there, which will give you accurate reports of your visitors, where they are coming from, and a lot more information.

6. Music



If people want to listen to music, they can download mp3s, listen to the radio, or buy a cassette or cd.

Unless your purpose is to scare people away from your website, avoid music. This means no Midi!

Remember, some people are using computers in public places, like internet cafes, schools and libraries. Nothing like having some loud cheesy midi file starting up, scaring your visitor and embarrassing him at the same time.

Also, a lot of people (myself included) use headphones. You wouldn't believe how annoying and scary it can be when some music starts up.

On one occasion, I actually fell out of my chair.

I hadn't noticed that my speakers been gotten turned up, way up. I had some joke page open up, and **BAM!!** .. I was unpleasantly disturbed when some loud cheesy midi starting playing. But for a few seconds, it didn't sound like a cheesy midi playing, it sounded like a *farm full of pigs being attacked by dinosaurs*.

Please, for the personal health and safety of your visitors,
avoid music.

(If you are completely set on having music on your webpage, then provide a way for people to be able to turn it off)

7. Last Updated

**This page was last updated on
January 30th, 1999.**

(actually, it wasn't. this is just an example)

Informing people when you've updated your website, is something not necessary and something that you should probably avoid unless you have a personal website.

Some exceptions might be websites that provide news, news portals, or a website that claims to offer up-to-the-hour information.

The negative side about informing people about when your website is the risk that you might not update for a bit.

Suppose you go on vacation. People don't know that you're on vacation, they'll just assume that you aren't doing anything with your website.

Something that says "Last updated a few months ago", will not give your visitors confidence or really make them trust you any better.

Take for example, a website that updates once a month... if they'd have a "Last Updated" date, people wouldn't trust them, as opposed to a website that doesn't inform their visitors that they haven't updated for a month.

There are many self-running websites on the internet. Some where the owner got kick-started it, and then it runs smoothly by itself with little or no maintenance necessary.

By the way, it's cheating to set up Javascript to automatically change the "Last Updated" date to the current date. And yes, I know some people use that. It's dishonest, and a website that does that loses all credibility with me. Yes, they may be tricking some visitors, but you aren't tricking me.

8. Color Selection

Choosing the right colors seems to be a big problem for some websites. Some are **major** eyesores.

Have somebody view your website before you put it online. Get different opinions on the colors.

For most business or commercial websites, a white or very light colored background is common.

Personal websites aren't quite as restricted, and having a website with a black background with aqua color letters isn't a problem, in my opinion. But save it for your personal website, not your commercial one.

Now, read the above as it should be.

Choosing the right colors seems to be a big problem for some websites. Some are **major** eyesores.

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Personal websites aren't quite as restricted, and having a website with a black background with aqua letters isn't a problem, in my opinion. But save it for your personal website, not your commercial one.

Let's get to the next page, this is hurting my eyes.

10. Horizontal Scroll Bar

Imagine if you were viewing a page, and as you attempt to read everything on the page, you have to **scroll right**, then **scroll left**, then **down**, then you **scroll right**, then **left** again, and then **down** some more.

Yes, I don't think you enjoy doing it. But amazingly some people don't check their website carefully and some people are forced to do the above.

Not everybody has big monitors, or a high screen resolution set. Check your website on different computers, with different browsers, with the window at different sizes.

Does a horizontal scroll bar appear?

If one does, then it may be time to go back through your HTML.

The horizontal scroll bar is usually caused by tables. Make changes to the tables, such changing the measurements, so that instead of pixels, it'll be set at a percentage.

That way the table or tables will automatically resize with whatever monitor is viewing them.

The other thing that can be a problem is large graphics. It may be a good idea to resize your images and make them smaller if they appear to be creating an horizontal scroll bar.

11. Spelling/Grammar

Whenever you go to purchase something, you usually expect the salesperson to know what they are talking about. And know how to pronounce the item that they have for sale (the client may not know how, but the salesperson should).

The same goes for websites. When I come across a website, with an obvious spelling mistake, I question the validity of the website and the person behind it.

Do they know what they are talking about?

How can I trust them to provide me with good service if they can't even spell?

Of course, there are typos. They happen to me all the time, although I can usually catch them before putting a page online. But, you can't use typos as an excuse when you misspell something! ;-)

Here are a few tips to make sure you don't misspell(too much).

- **Use a spell-checker.** Word processing programs and most HTML Editors come with built-in spell-checkers. At <http://www.prowebmanagement.com/wordweb.html>, you'll find information on a really good FREE dictionary/thesaurus.

- **Use a dictionary.** I try to keep one beside my computer at all times.

- **Read what you wrote, carefully.** Read it again. Read it an hour later. Read it before uploading it. Read it after you've put it online. And then come back in a few days, and read it again.

- **Have somebody else read it.** I always have my dad read over my issue of Awesome Solutions For Webmasters before I send it out.

So, if you find any misspellings in my newsletter, blame my dad.

Don't forget: just because a word is not misspelled doesn't mean it's the right word.

An example for this is YOU'RE and YOUR.
Remember that **YOU'RE** changes to **YOU ARE**.
So many times I've seen '*you're website*' on pages.

Good luck with **you're** spelling!

12. 404

404: Page Not Found

I'm sure that by now, you know what a 404 error is.

In case, you don't. A 404 is the error that people receive when a page that they are trying to access is not there.

I see a lot of this when I'm surfing around on the internet.

This has to be one of the most common and worse mistakes that websites make.

When a visitor gets a 404 error on one of your pages, they're going to wonder, just what kind of a website you have. I usually leave a website when I receive a 404 error from a link off the website's main page.

What can you do?

I recommend [Xenu Link Sleuth](#).

I copy & pasted the below text from the main page where you can download Xenu:

Xenu's Link Sleuth (TM) is a spidering software that checks Web sites for broken links. Link verification is done on "normal" links, images, frames, plug-ins, backgrounds, local image maps, style sheets, scripts and java applets. It displays a continuously updated list of URLs which you can sort by different criteria. A report can be produced at any time.

I use this software occasionally, although probably not enough.

I've had 404 errors on my website more than once. Usually caused by mistakes with case-sensitive urls.

Having a file named CoolKill.zip and the download link going to coolkill.zip. My web host doesn't recognize it. So somebody going to CoolKill.zip will receive a 404 error message.

13. Stupid Browser Tricks



Last but not least, comes the stupid tricks.

Please... your visitor doesn't want little bubbles following their mouse.

Unless perhaps, your website targets 2 year olds.

Mouseovers **can** be okay for some images, if used the right way.

But don't even think of that silly script *thingie* that changes the background color of the page.

What a nuisance.

I could go on and on with dumb things that can be done. But it's not a pleasant thought.

Remember, the trick could freeze somebody's computer.

And I can guarantee that the odds are very slim of that person ever wanting to return to your site, unless it's your grandmother.

Don't forget that you aren't the first person to use a '*trick*' on your website, and unless it's vital for your website, avoid using it.

So concludes Website Traffic Demolition..

But that doesn't mean that this is going to be the last edition. I plan on updating this.

The internet is growing and changing every day. By the next 'edition', I'm sure I'll have other things that you can do, to help keep people away from your website.

I hope you'll follow the tips, it'll help your website.

Send your tips, criticisms, suggestions, complaints to
Jonathan Harbaugh
trafficdemolition@prowebsitemanagement.com

Be sure to sign up for my newsletter **Awesome Solutions For Webmasters**. It's a biweekly newsletter that I publish, and it has helpful articles, cool tools, reviews, drawings and more. I'll also be keeping subscribers up-to-date with my ebook projects.
<http://www.prowebsitemanagement.com/awesomesolutions.html>

Special thanks to :

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Your Name could be here if you help. :-)

You may freely distribute this ebook on your website.

About the Author

Jonathan Harbaugh is the webmaster of

PRO Website Management

<http://www.prowebmanagement.com>

He also publishes a biweekly newsletter called **Awesome Solutions For Webmasters**, which comes out with info-loaded articles, cool tools, reviews, funny quotes, drawings and more.

<http://www.prowebmanagement.com/awesomesolutions.html>

His hobbies (in no particular order) include **books, chess, soccer, writing, good movies, swimming, website design, and computer security.**

Find out more about him at:

<http://www.prowebmanagement.com/jonathan.html>



You can contact him at
jonathan@prowebmanagement.com

For anything regarding the ebook, contact him at
trafficedemolition@prowebmanagement.com